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SUBJECT: UNSC: UNDOF MANDATE RENEWED FOR SIX MONTHS

REF: STATE 64812

¶1. (U) The Security Council adopted resolution 1875 on June 23 extending the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan Heights for another six months until December 30, ¶2009. The Council also agreed to an accompanying Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2009/18) which was read by the President of the Council. (Note: Both documents will be posted on the Council's web site at www.un.org/Docs/sc/index.html. End note.) (Comment: Aside from changes to the dates, the text of the resolution and PRST are identical to those previously approved by the Council for UNDOF. End comment.)

¶2. (SBU) During Council consultations on the Secretary-General's June 9, 2009 report on UNDOF. UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations Director of Asia and the Middle East Division Wolfgang Weisbrod-Weber briefed the Council with supplemental information that was not included in the June 9 report. He noted that UNDOF had increased its patrols during the Gaza conflict in December 2008 and January 2009 from 70 to 90 patrols per day. He said that civilian growth on the Syrian side in the area of separation has led to increased interaction between UNDOF and the civilian population. He announced that Poland, a long-standing troop contributing country (TCC) to UNDOF, would be withdrawing its forces, and DPKO was looking for a replacement TCC and would reconfigure the deployment to meet UNDOF's needs, given the growth of the civilian population. After questions from Council members. Weisbrod-Weber noted that there had been a recent visit to the UNDOF area of operations by the Office of Military Affairs (OMA) to assess the civilian growth and the necessary force restructuring for the changed operational environment.

¶3. (SBU) Council members in their statements uniformly called for a settlement to the conflict and many, including France, Austria, Costa Rica, Japan, Mexico, and Russia, urged Israel and Syria to resume their indirect talks through Turkey. Turkey said it would do what it could to restart the talks and welcomed the visit of Special Envoy Mitchell to Damascus. Both France and the UK stressed that all peacekeeping operations should be subject to strategic reviews. The UK encouraged DPKO to have a dialogue with Council members prior to future strategic assessment missions in order to incorporate the Council's input into terms of reference. Mexico called for future reports on UNDOF to include more information. (Comment: The Secretary-General's June 9 UNDOF report is virtually word for word identical to the last report, aside from changes to the dates and figures included. There is no mention of OMA's May assessment mission to the UNDOF area of operations, for example. We understand that DPKO changes little in the report at Syrian government insistence, since Syria views any change as sending a negative political signal. End comment.)

¶4. (SBU) Ambassador DiCarlo noted the U.S. effort to extend UNDOF's mandate from six to 12 months to promote greater Council efficiency and make it consistent with its annual

budget cycle, which runs from July 1 to June 30. She said that Syria had voiced a strong preference for retaining the six-month mandate, viewing an extension to a 12-month mandate as a negative signal on the peace process, and that although we disagree with Syria's reasoning, we would not press the point this time. She asked DPKO to consider whether it should recommend a 12-month mandate for the next renewal period. Several Council members, including Costa Rica, Croatia (UNDOF TCC), and Japan (UNDOF TCC) specifically stated a preference for a 12-month mandate in the future.

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